



Participant Guide

Relaxation Techniques: Time to Practice (30 Min)

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Overview

Relaxation is more than escape — it is about creating practices that support and sustain balance in our lives. Relaxation is the flip side of stress. This seminar is an opportunity to practice relaxation techniques to better shape your responses to events. The goal is to improve your mind, body, behavior, and emotions.

Agenda Topics

- ✓ Understand how stress impacts the body
- ✓ Practice relaxation techniques
- ✓ Identify simple ways of bringing relaxation into daily life

Seminar Length: 30 minutes

Introduction

- Creating practices that support and sustain balance in our lives
- You can't hide from yourself

"Wherever you go, there you are."

Jon Kabat-Zinn

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Physical Aspects of Stress

Fight or Flight	Relaxation
↑ Heart Rate/Pulse	↓ Heart Rate/Pulse
↑ Blood Pressure	↓ Blood Pressure
↑ Shallow Chest Breathing	↑ Full Abdominal Breathing
↑ Muscle Tension	↓ Muscle Tension
↓ Blood Vessel Size	↑ Blood Vessel Size
↓ Skin Temperature	↑ Skin Temperature
↓ Digestive System Changes	↑ Digestive System Changes
↓ Immune System	↑ Immune System

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Time to Practice

- Breathing
- Massage
- Eye Relaxation
- Stretching

Quick Relaxation Tips

- Go for a walk
- Listen to music, dance, sing
- Smile, laugh—it alters your mood
- Shake your arms and hands for 10 seconds
- Put your head down on the desk and rest for 5 minutes
- Close your eyes and imagine a favorite vacation spot

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Relaxation Tips with a Little Planning

- Take a nap
- Take a hot bath
- Play with a pet
- Get a massage
- Connect with nature
- Do something that gives you pleasure



Life Practices

- Vacation
- Body and Brain Health
 - Sleep, Nutrition, Exercise, Recharge, Social Connection
- Mind-Body Practices
 - Yoga, Tai Chi, Qi Gong, Mindfulness, Feldenkrais



Takeaway

What is one thing you will do daily to help cultivate relaxation?



Confidential Life Balance Solutions at No Cost To You

Counseling

Set of free face-to-face, phone video or chat sessions per issue per 12 months

- Difficulty with relationships
- Emotional distress
- Job Stress
- Communication/conflict
- Substance use
- Grief

Parent Coaching

Set of 3 phone sessions per year

- Child development & behavior
- Social anxiety
- Excess screen time
- Supplemental to counseling

Family Care

Resources for all stages of life: Parenting & Childcare

- Childcare resources & referrals
- Parent coaching
- Tutors, mentors, programs for children with special needs
- Teens, college and beyond
- New Baby Kit

Adult Care Needs

- Meals-on-Wheels
- Alzheimer's education
- In-home, sub-acute, rehab care
- Free resource book

Legal & Financial

Legal Referrals

- Immigration
- Family law
- Estate planning
- Wills & trust

Financial Consultations

- Money management
- Debt consolidation
- Investment basics
- Income taxes

ID theft resolution

employees.concernhealth.com 800 -344-4222

Benefits

Your employer cares about you as an employee and as a person who lives a life outside the workplace. We at Concern understand how balancing these roles can make your life a juggling act:

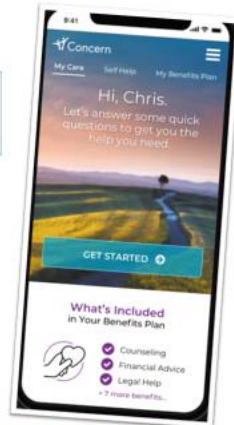
- Balancing work, home, and leisure
- Taking care of people who rely on you
- Dealing with the stress of modern life
- Handling loss and the unexpected

Call Concern's toll-free number if you feel overwhelmed by the stressors in life. 800-344-4222

Concern's Digital Platform

Your front-door for easy, confidential access to personalized support, anytime you need it

- Easy access on your computer or portable devices
- Create your personal dashboard
- Request services, select counselors
- Connect to mindfulness resources from eM Life



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Concern's Digital Platform

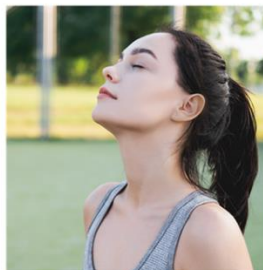
Accessible from your phone, tablet or computer. It is your front door to everything Concern has to offer: your Personalized Dashboard.

It combines technology, counseling, and self-help tools with compassionate human interaction – all in one place.

eM Life App. Mindfulness for Everyday Living

Access via Digital Platform

- Evidence-based
- Designed for daily use
- Live and on-demand
- Personalized experience
- Expands prevention
- New skills



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Mindfulness for Everyday Living

You have access to eM Life – an entire suite of evidence-based live and on-demand mindfulness solutions.

- It Can be accessed via the Concern Website: employees.concernhealth.com, or
- You can download and access via your mobile phone.

Thank you!
Questions? Comments?

Please complete the Survey Monkey
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3VHDNPS>



Breathing Exercise

- Make yourself comfortable. Sit back in your chair, have your back straight but not stiff. Your head straight, resting on your shoulders. Feet planted firmly on the ground.
- Allow your hands to be relaxed, in your lap, or resting gently, palms up, at your sides.
- Take several long, slow, deep breaths, breathing in fully and exhaling slowly. As you exhale, blow as if you are blowing out a candle, but slowly so the flame only flickers and does not go out...
- Allow your breath to find its own natural rhythm. Feel the cool air as it enters your nose... and the warm air as you exhale.
- Let your eyes close, or simply leave them softly focused.
- Become aware now of your stomach, as it expands on the in-breath and relaxes and let's go on the outbreath.
- To help you with concentration, for the next breaths I would like you to count to five on the in -breath and say "Relax" to yourself as you slowly exhale.
- When your mind wanders from your counting as you are distracted by sounds, or my voice, simply notice the distraction like clouds floating by and when you notice you are distracted; return to focus on the 'breathing'...
- And now, bring your attention to the area of your body where you experience pain...tension...or tightness, and imagine that area of pain softening and releasing with time you exhale.
- And now allow your attention to return to your breath ...feeling the rise and fall of your abdomen ...now, include your entire body ...becoming aware of yourself sitting on the chair...opening your eyes and slowly becoming aware of other images in the room...
- And now, stretch your arms out in front of you, feeling the life in your hands and arms; breathe deeply; release, and return fully alert and awake to the present moment.

Self-Massage – Shoulders

- Rub your left shoulder with your right hand. Mold your hand to the curves of your body. Starting at the base of your skull, stroke down the side of your neck, over your shoulder and down your arm to the elbow. Go back to your neck and repeat. Then do the other side.
- Make circular pressures with your fingertips on either side of the spine. Work up the neck and around the base of the skull. Then squeeze and release the flesh on your shoulders and at the top of your arms.
- Finish by stroking softly and smoothly using both hands. Start with your hands on the side of your face and glide them under your chin. Slide your hands past each other at the front of the neck, so that each hand is on the opposite shoulder. Stroke gently over your shoulders, down your arms and off at the fingertips. Repeat as often as you like. This is relaxing and relieves headaches and tension.

Eye Relaxation

1. Try to take a 5-minute break every 40 minutes of working with computers.
2. Work in a room/office with enough light, and if necessary, use a desk light to illuminate your documents to the brightness of your screen.
3. Set up your monitor a little lower than your eye height.
4. Use blinds or curtains to reduce reflections on the screen.
5. Blink and use eyedrops when you are in a room/office with air conditioning.
 - a. Place your palms gently over your eyes and block out all of the light.
 - b. While eyes are covered, focus on the color 'black' for several minutes
 - c. Slowly open your eyes as you gradually become accustomed to the light.
 - d. Feel the sensation of relaxation

Stretching

Systematically go through the body and stretch and/or tense, then relax each identified body part.

1. Sit comfortably in a chair.
2. Tense or stretch each muscle group for about five seconds. Pay attention to how the tension feels
3. Breathe deeply as you do these exercises.
4. As you exhale, let go of the tension.
5. Spend some time noticing how the relaxed state feels.
6. Go through and tense/relax each group several times.
7. If time is a limiting factor, then only perform these exercises on some muscle groups. (e.g., hands, feet, etc.)

Upper Limbs

1. Gently stretch arms and when they are returned to your lap; clench your fists tightly. Now more tightly for several seconds.
2. Relax your arms and hands and feel the change.
3. Repeat the process.
4. Now bend your arms at the elbow and tighten the biceps.
5. Relax and feel the difference.

Legs & Feet

1. Stretch your legs out parallel to the floor and extend toes out and back as far as possible.
2. Return legs to floor.
3. Press your feet against the floor and after several seconds, release.
4. Point your toes down creating pressure in the calves and then release.
5. Point your toes back creating pressure in the shins and then release.

Upper Body

1. Take a deep breath; hold it and then relax.
2. Bring your shoulders up as close to your ears as possible. Hold them; now roll them and then relax.
3. Arch your back; hold and now relax.

Neck

1. Hold head back as far as you can. Hold it. Now Relax.
2. Put chin toward chest as far as possible. Hold it. Now relax.
3. Stomach and Buttocks:
4. Hold stomach muscles tight; now relax.
5. Hold buttocks tight; now relax.

Face

1. Scrunch up your face and forehead as tight as possible. Hold it. Now Relax.
2. Close your eyes tightly and wrinkle your nose.
3. Clench your jaw. Hold. Relax.
4. Press your tongue against your mouth top. Hold Relax.
5. Press you lips tightly together. Hold. Relax.

For a minute close your eyes, breathe deeply, notice any tension in your body and let it soften and wash away as though a wave were washing over you.

Sound

- Music can alter our mood.
- Choose input that will help you unwind

Visual Pleasure

- Survey your surroundings to see if they contribute to your calm.
- Consider bringing some part of the outdoors inside.

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Check those techniques that might work for you

- Postpone thinking about problems when you are overwhelmed or stressed.
- Give yourself a half hour, half day, or overnight break.
- Get realistic about “perfection: and build in a “margin of realism” to account for failures.
- Contact a friend. Talk, vent, have lunch, go for a walk, and don’t talk shop.
- Wear clothes that make you feel comfortable and boost your self-image.
- Consider using milk as a natural tranquilizer instead of sedatives.
- Take a walk instead of a coffee break. Large muscle exercise does as much for headaches, depression, or stress as anything else.
- Get exercise.
- Sleep enough for you. Take naps if they agree with you.
- Don’t take yourself, your skills, or flaws too seriously.
- Maintain your sense of humor and ability to laugh.
- Enjoy hot tubs, hot showers, whirlpools, and saunas when available.
- Take a candlelight bubble bath with a glass of wine.
- Dance
- Do something you always wanted to do.
- Finish a task. That’s a great stress and depression reliever.
- Practice your faith. Join a worship group—unless you’re over committed.
- Try quiet relaxation, meditation, yoga, deep breathing.
- Read a novel (not a self-help book).
- Listen to music—and don’t watch TV, read, or pay bills at the same time.
- Find an enjoyable hobby.
- Take a “mini vacation” of one or more days out of town.
- Do something fun with your partner at least once a week.
- Do something fun with your kids at least once a week.
- Create and negotiate for win-win situations whenever possible.
- When appropriate, cry. It’s one of nature’s great safety valves.
- Buy yourself a gift for no specific reason.
- Don’t abuse any substance—food, alcohol, coffee, sugar, or drugs.
- Learn how and when to say No.
- Recognize your limitations as signs of humanness, not inadequacy.
- Avoid being a workaholic. It’s a form of escape and it’s counterproductive.
- Guilt is taught. Some guilt is emotional excess baggage. Let go of it.
- Don’t confide in people you don’t trust to a high degree.
- Anticipate stressful situations and prepare for them. Eat, rest, and rehearse.
- Do deep breathing exercises at work.
- Stand up while talking on the phone.
- Do stretching exercises while at your work area.